844 good taste. The placenta is buried outdoors near the hut or sometimes in the floor of the hut itself. The mother is washed and often given an infusion to drink which is alleged to stop bleeding.

The baby is washed several times and then anointed with vegetable fat (1) (se tlu) or butter made from cow's milk. Its

1. Known to Europeans as karite, originally a Soninké word.

head is massaged to give it a nice shape, and then the baby is wrapped in a white cloth.

The child is usually not fed for the first 24 hours, although it is sometimes given a few drops of goat's milk, a beverage with mystical qualities. It is then given the breast.

851 At the earliest possible moment the father must be informed of the birth and sex of the child. Indeed, he is brought in by the woman who cut the cord, and the mother shows him the baby, pointing out any body characteristic which seems to her a manifest sign that the child is a reincarnation [211] of a deceased member of the family or other evidence that there has been some influence from the invisible world.

[903] The same woman informs the local authorities (dugu-tigi, nyana-n-son-na-ba, etc.) and the people in the vicinity; the news spreads rapidly.

846 The mother resumes her normal activities as soon as possible and is often on her feet within 24 hours. In any event, she never remains in bed for more than a week, unless it is absolutely impossible for her to get up. For seven or eight days, however, she remains in seclusion. Furthermore, particularly in Kaarta, her food is prepared exclusively by girl friends of her choice.

[751] The detachment of the umbilical cord marks the end of this period of seclusion. In Kaarta the cord is preserved and placed in a small bag which is tied around the baby's neck; later on it will be made into a precious talisman. It is only after the detachment of the cord that the child is considered to be definitely